



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**LEBANON**

## SUCCESS STORY

### Youth Campaigns Model Active Citizenship



IndyYouth held People Against Plastic events to raise environmental awareness on the Global Day of Action Against Waste.

***“I’ve supported [environmental] campaigns and activities, but never pictured myself actually organizing one, especially at my age. IndyYouth showed me that I can... It’s my outlet, my voice in society.”***

**—Dima, an IndyYouth activist**

**January 2009** – “My fabric bag just saved a turtle.” These attention-grabbing words on shopping bags were the slogan of a youth-led environmental campaign in Beirut. Young people learned how to conduct these types of campaigns thanks to the League of Independent Activists (IndyAct), a youth-led organization partnered with USAID’s Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI).

During a week-long training camp, youths learned to advocate, communicate, and mobilize others for positive action. Known as IndyYouth, the participants then carried out advocacy campaigns on a wide variety of issues. They addressed decision makers on climate change policy, organized street performances about the importance of nonviolence, and distributed supplies to underprivileged schools.

In Beirut, IndyYouth recorded an environmental song and displayed a raft made of plastic bottles to encourage people to recycle. In the southern city of Saida, IndyYouth took to the streets to spread messages of peace through song and dance.

By targeting 13- to 18-year-olds, IndyAct’s programs support peer learning as the older youths become role models for the younger teens, inspiring them to turn their ideas into action. “Apart from creating an environmental change,” said 17-year-old Sherif, “we also started a social change, an activist movement where we are encouraging people to act, but for once, to act differently.” Echoing this sentiment, Dima, also 17, said, “After our campaign, my school got interested and we are working together for further projects.”

IndyYouth from different regions have supported each others’ campaigns and modeled a cooperative advocacy to transcend the sectarian differences that often divide Lebanon.

OTI support has helped IndyAct expand its reach not only to areas outside the capital but also beyond Lebanon’s borders, as the Beirut-based organization, using the training techniques developed through this project, is now transferring its approach to nongovernmental organizations interested in replicating its success in Jordan and Egypt.